



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
ci.northfield.mn.us

Meeting Minutes - Draft Environmental Quality Commission

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

7:00 PM

City Hall 2nd Floor Training Room

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and took Roll Call.

Also Present: Youth Representative, Lucy Menssen; City of Northfield Program Coordinator, Beth Kallestad; AmeriCorps/VISTA staff, Stephanie Bramwell; Recording Secretary, Cindy Stock; MN Center for Energy and Environment, Katie Jones (via Zoom).

Present: 6 - Commissioner Janet Petri, Commissioner Mika Turner, Commissioner Bruce Anderson, Commissioner Daniel Jones, Commissioner Evan Pak and Commissioner Michael Zenner

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Pak, to approve the Meeting Agenda for September 15, 2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Pak and Commissioner Zenner

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Pak, seconded by Commissioner Petri, to approve the amended August 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Pak and Commissioner Zenner

1. [21-520](#) August 18, 2021 EQC Meeting Minutes.

Attachments: [8-18-21 Minutes](#)

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

V. OLD BUSINESS

2. [21-521](#) Draft Sustainable Building Policy.

Attachments: [1 - Northfield SBP Stakeholder Handout 7 21 21](#)
[2 - Northfield SBP Proposed Policy presentation](#)

EQC received a presentation by Katie Jones of MN Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) on the draft sustainable Building Policy for Northfield, and provided feedback to questions.

In June 2021, the City of Northfield began working with the Minnesota Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) to develop some language and criteria for a possible Sustainable Building Policy. This type of policy is an action item in the Climate Action Plan and as a way to make progress on building energy use and other sustainability factors. The State of Minnesota does not allow cities to be more restrictive than the state building and energy code. However, if there is a financial incentive provided by the City on a project then sustainability criteria can be included if the City adopts such a policy. The City will be proposing some criteria that will trigger such a situation. There are six other cities in Minnesota with such policies going back to 2010. A group of city staff participated in four meetings with CEE to develop suggested criteria for a policy and are now engaging with stakeholders for feedback before developing a draft policy to share with City Council in November 2021.

3. [21-522](#) Climate Action Plan (CAP) Work Group Updates.

Attachments: [1 - WaterRebateProgram](#)

Water Work Group - Mika Turner reviewed with EQC Rochester's water conservation rebate program application she would like to propose for EQC and City of Northfield to incorporate. Mika will get more information from Rochester in regards to:

- how many Rochester rebates per year turned in
- how funded - Carbon Reduction Fund?

Urban Forest Work Group - In September this work group met, and also meets October 5th. Daniel Jones will be receiving feedback from the group in the interim and will push out a second possibly a third draft at which time he will have more information to be presented at the October EQC meeting. This pushes farther into the optimal planting season but Daniel is optimistic there is still time to get the trees in the ground. Another offer out there from George Kinney and Leif Knecht as another possibility for planting trees yet this fall.

Daniel received an email from Council Member Suzie Nakasian stating she's working on a tree planting and maintenance plan. Met with her, she's actually working more so on a proposal for an arborist position than an actual planting plan. Filled her in on what EQC is doing and received her feedback.

The opinion of this work group, the City & Public Works Dpt., a really successful implemented urban forest plan is going to require soliciting/encouraging significant public involvement and engagement (neighborhoods watering trees/water bags/water distribution).

Daniel will be meeting with Tim Behrendt, Streets and Parks Manager. At their September 1st meeting, Tim expressed the plan needs to be very specific on who does what, when, where and what the exact responsibilities are.

Daniel shared with EQC George and Leif's plan they proposed in Spring of 2021, of identifying non athletic city properties that are mostly grass currently and to plant trees in these areas (southeast part of town), Liberty Park area was later identified. They would donate these trees and maintain. Daniel to follow-up with them to bring them up to speed.

Beth Kallestad announced the Emerald Ash Borer Grant was awarded from DNR to help work on the tree replacement/removal - \$92,000 over two (2) years - part of it to be used to update and finalize the plan, and start community education around emerald ash borer and why trees are coming down/be treated etc. No public announcement until contract signed from DNR.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pak, seconded by Commissioner Jones, to support and create a Water Conservation Rebate Program in the City of Northfield. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Pak and Commissioner Zenner

VI. NEW BUSINESS

4. [21-523](#)

Presentation on Transportation/Active Mobility Project.

The EQC received a presentation regarding Transportation/Active Mobility Project by Stephanie Bramwell, our AmeriCorps/VISTA staff member working with the City of Northfield from August 2021-July 2022.

Ecolibrium 3 - (about 30 non profit VISTA's based in Duluth & throughout the state) mission is to inspire and lead change in communities toward an equitable and sustainable future. There two (2) missions:

- The first is serving as the neighborhood convening organization in Duluth's low-income Lincoln Park neighborhood, working on all aspects of sustainable revitalization that advance opportunities for residents and businesses.*
- The second is a focus on community sustainability and resiliency including aspects of energy transition, housing stock improvement, economic security, and health.*

VISTA program is a subset of AmeriCorps who doesn't necessarily focus on implementation of project, but focuses on creating 'building capacity' - research, recruitment of volunteers, creating systems so that the work is sustainable for organizations.

Stephanie's work focus will be on:

- Transportation in Northfield - transportation solutions that are environmentally sustainable and expand options for under-represented community members: (1) identifying needs, barriers & solutions (2) creating communication materials as to what are the transportation options (3) identifying funding opportunities*
- Community engagement - speaking with community, previous surveys, educational opportunities for people who speak primarily Spanish*
- Active mobility - walking, hiking, public transportation, electric vehicles/car shares*

Walk to School Day October 6 - event hosted at Bridgewater Elementary (2 routes), volunteers needed.

VII. STAFF UPDATES

City Board & Commission Training Event - October 27th 5:30 - 7:00 PM at the Northfield Senior Center Dining Room, 1651 Jefferson Pkwy, Meal provided (may be recorded/not live streamed). RSVP to invitation.

Electric Vehicle Experience - event is not cancelled, too many people invested in this event. There was definite concern from Recharge (main partners) regarding their ability to get dealers to bring vehicles and also people sitting in vehicles/COVID. A handful of Rotary Club members have committed to bring their electric vehicles.

Staff is working with Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) on an information campaign to small and medium sized businesses for free lighting assessments, upgrades and rebates from Xcel. Postcards and emails sent, ad in Chamber e-blast, on City Kiosk, ads on KYMN radio.

November 9th in Northfield - contractor training with CEE for sales people and installers of Air Source Heat Pumps. Faribault and Red Wing trying to get contractors to attend.

Southeast Cities Community Engagement Cohort - staff are working with University of Minnesota Extension to plan the workshop meetings for City partners to take place in the fall. First multi-city meeting will be September 29th. Comment period opens in November. This is about the Xcel Energy IDP not the cohort item.

Energy Transition Options planning work will be getting underway with Nokomis Energy.

September 17th, staff are planning to attend the online Xcel Energy, Stakeholder workshop for the 2021 integrated Distribution Plan, Docket No. E002/M-19-666 (may get a new number. E-Docket web page - it's the year and the 3 digit for the docket). Any EQC members interested in participating, contact Beth for link to join the meeting.

Mike Zenner and Beth Kallestad contacted Tricia Duncan from Xcel regarding grid modernization questions. Will share more with EQC when answers received.

Beth Kallestad presented at the September 7th City Council meeting to start them thinking about the energy transition options/directions. No time for questions. Gave them small survey to rank some priority items - has received three (3) back. Beth concludes we need to do with them more education, share information, have conversations around the directions of renewable energy choices and credits.

5. [21-524](#) Staff Update.

VIII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND UPDATES

Commissioner Zenner will chair the October 20th EQC Meeting, as Commissioner Anderson will not be in attendance.

Youth Representative, Lucy Menssen shared Northfield High School Environmental Club was having their kickoff event on October 18th.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Zenner, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Pak and Commissioner Zenner